Headin' for the Hills

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WHAT A BREAK THIS IS, LOUISE!

George and I might have spent the balance of the winter fairly itching to tell someone about our last summer's vacation and getting very little encouragement. Then you and Tom come along simply asking for it. Delightful people! Not only willing to listen to the story of someone else's travels, but eager for details. Well, get set and we'll pour it on because we are like the old maid who had the youthful romance—we love to talk about it, and by the time we are through with this armchair tour you wont hesitate any more about making Montana your playground for next summer.

George thinks he has grown up too sedate, baldish, middle-age, but I know better. He is still a small boy at heart with a yen for adventure. In the spring you can tell when the old pioneer urge is gripping him. He lugs home wood pulp westerns with sheriffs and vanishing redskins galloping across the cover while a haze of powder smoke oozes out from between the pages.

I don't inherit a flair for the tambourine and other gypsy accessories, nor have I ever cherished a desire to be a hardy pioneer woman on the lone pa-rare-ee, but I have stood willing to follow my man with dog-like devotion if he said, "Gal, I'm sho, aimin to leave the settlements and p'int fer the settin' sun." But he never did. It always wound up the same way. We'd spend our vacation doing the usual stunts fairly close to home just because we took it for granted that a western trip was air castle stuff—highly desirable and lovely to dream about, but impractical. How dumb we were! !

Then George came home one evening last spring so full of western atmosphere that he was walking bow-legged and you could hear the spurs jingle. He had written to the Montana Highway Deparptment and in reply, their Traffic Department not only forwarded the map he requested, but a lot of other publications and a personal letter saying that they wanted to help in every way possible if we were contemplating a visit to Montana. Before we knew it we were carrying on a spirited correspondence, they had knocked some of our mistaken notions into a cocked hat and we had definitely planned a trip that would cover several weeks in Montana, including Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks.

You never knew my older sister, Elizabeth, did you Louise? She is a widow with one lone chick and she's a bit Victorian in her ideas. However, when I wrote her that we had decided on a Montana vacation it didn't astonish her half as much as her reply astounded me. She has always considered me mildly "teched" but I wasn't quite prepared for her threadbare plot—distressed parent sending adored child on far trip with watchful relatives to forget ineligible suitor.

She wanted us to take her eighteen-year-old Jean with us because Jean had become very much interested in some college senior whom she had met at a fraternity dance. I don't suppose Elizabeth expected Jean to be reading "Little Women," and she admitted never having met this young sprig, but those kids had been carrying on a too fervid correspondence to suit her. She had also gleaned from Jean that this leading juvenile was a young Lochinvar out of the west and so she had visions of an uncouth, cowboyish person with a horsey smell and a mouth-harp trying to crash the family.

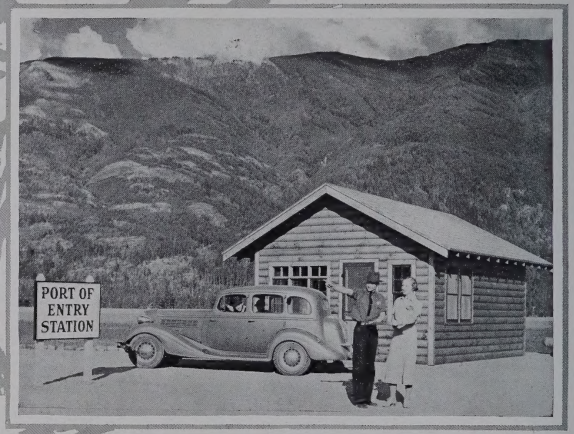
Elizabeth was set on our taking Jean with us to break up this pupy love affair. Her theory was that if the young lady could see some of the far west in all of its raw, crude details, the glamour of cow persons would depart. Of course, we two childless people were tickled to death to take Jean with us. It gave us an opportunity to size things up from another viewpoint—that of youth, and she was certainly good company and a comfort to us.

HEADIN' FOR THE HILLS

This album was her idea. We took scads of pictures on the trip, including a few blanks and double exposures, so Jean suggested fixing up a pictorial outline of our trek. We have arranged them more or less according to subject rather than chronology. The shots are typical, but lacking color they, of course, give you just an inkling of what to expect on **your** trip. Don't fail to take a camera and **use** it.

George insisted that we start right at taw, so Jean took this flashlight picture of us planning the trip. I wanted George to be poring over a globe with a pair of dividers in one hand and a chart in the other, but he said this was no sea-going expedition, so here we are, looking over the Montana Highway Department's 1936 booklet called "The New Trail." Their Traffic Department had mailed us up-to-date maps and had made suggestions for routes and things to see and do. They even sent us a bibliography covering Montana subjects. Most of the books listed were in our public library, so we had a lot of fun reading up and planning ahead for at least a month before we left. It adds a lot to a trip if you know something about the country you are passing through. If I am wheeling by a place where an Indian battle was staged, by jinks, I want to know it, and moreover, I want to know why it was fought and who licked, don't you?

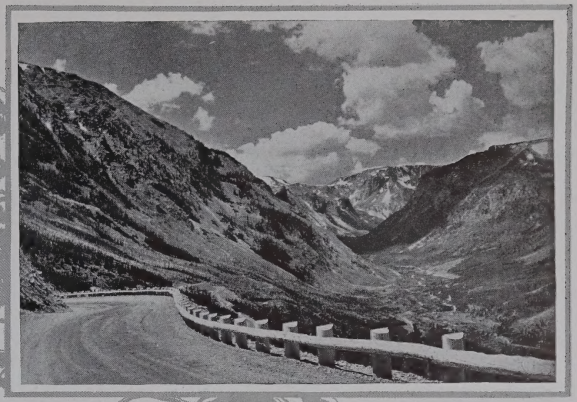
We left here one morning bright and early. We shed our last care and worry when that usual uneasy feeling of having forgotten something finally wore off. We didn't linger along the route those first days because Montana was our objective and we wanted as much time there as possible.



Shortly after we entered Montana we saw this welcome sign which is painted on solid copper. Montana is nicknamed the Treasure State and her copper mines have helped to make that name appropriate. The sign also tells you that there is a Port of Entry station one thousand feet down the road and you are supposed to stop there. When George read that he began moaning about another racket and the humiliation of being treated like undesirable aliens. You know, a lot of states do put out a pretty officious, hard-boiled reception at their borders. George was still grumbling and digging for his credentials when we pulled into the station, but up stepped a young fellow with an engaging smile who sang out, "Howdy, everyone! Glad to see you," in a tone that sounded as though he meant it.

George was suspicious until that boy told us that he was there as a representative of the State Highway Department just to welcome and assist strangers. There was no registration required and no inspection of luggage. We were so intrigued with this novel reception that we asked a thousand questions and he knew all of the answers. We found out that there are three attendants assigned to each station. They are carefully selected native college boys who talk well, look well, know their state and have manners. The ports are not all right at the border because in some instances they can build them at the junction of two incoming highways and kill two birds with one stone.

That boy's courtesy gave us our first impression of Montana people and you find the same natural and hospitable spirit all through the state. He asked permission to place an identifying sticker on our windshield and when we found that it read "Montana Guest" instead of "Non-Resident Permit" we were more than willing.



Naturally the first question Tom would ask, if we gave him a chance to get in a word edgeways, would be, "How about the roads?" George, you tell him. . . . . .

Well, all right. You know, it seems funny to us now, but before we visited Montana I suppose we thought of it in the light of covered wagon or frontier days, with unimproved, unmarked trails running aimlessly over the country. As a matter of fact, they have a network of paved arterial highways that make traveling a pleasure. Montana is the third largest state in the Union and sparsely populated. In consequence towns are far apart and they have to build a big mileage with limited funds in order to get anywhere. Why, they have counties as large as some eastern states.

The Montana Highway Department is responsible for building and maintaining the main highways or so-called Federal Aid System. It has no jurisdiction over the county roads, though. The Department has developed a type of oiled or asphalt surfacing which permits them to spread their money thin with maximum results. They now have about 4,500 miles of safe, dustless all-weather highways, with new construction in progress each year. They are also widening and otherwise improving their earlier standards as rapidly as finances permit. Personally, I like to drive those black top roads better than other paved types and beyond doubt, everything considered, they are the proper thing for that country.

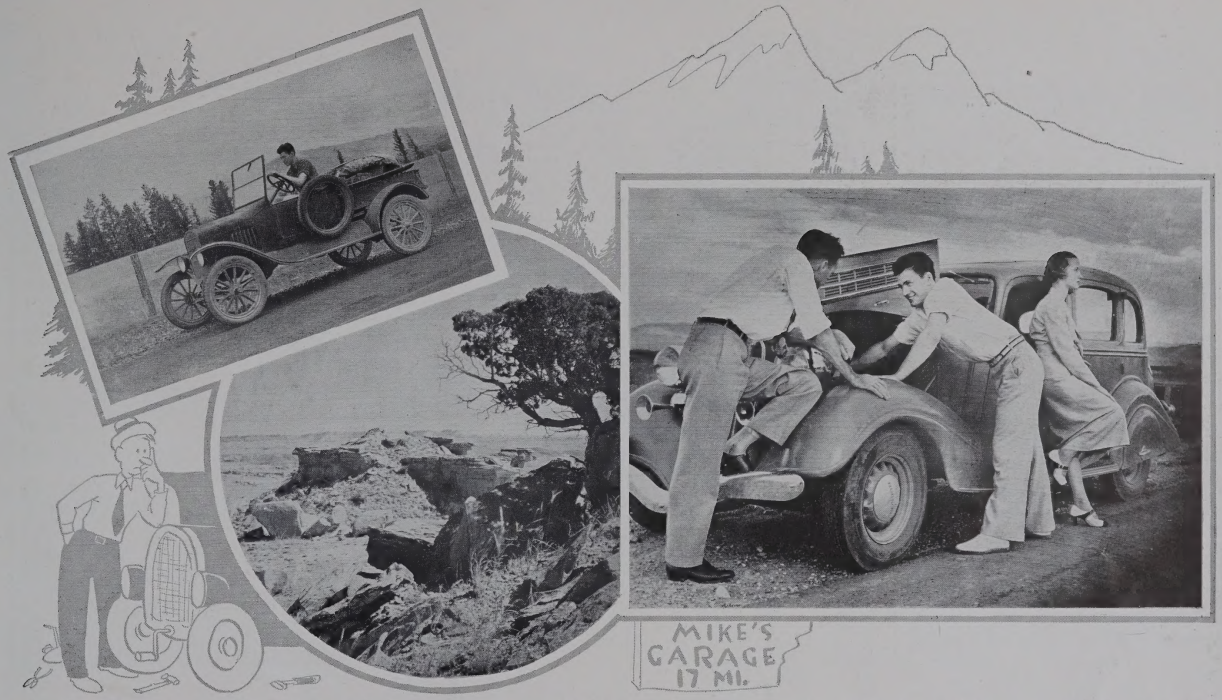
So just forget any qualms you may have had about Montana highways, Tom — they are smooth riding and you can see by these pictures that they are easy on the eyes as well.

All right, Chatterbox, as Andrew H. Brown would say, "Receed."

I love my home, Louise, but I am convinced that being a motoring tourist once a year is a great tonic for anyone. You meet so many interesting people from every part of the world. Some stop at hotels, some prefer cabin camps, some have their own camping outfits and many live in their trailers. But they all are having a good time. They are more friendly and informal when they get out there. Guess they soak up some of that old pioneer spirit that has made Montana famous. Those three girls were having the time of their lives frying trout for breakfast at a camp ground in a cedar forest. Those two young couples were from Canada. They were on a vacation they had been planning for four years and were they enjoying it! ! You see trailers of every description from the home-made variety to snooty, custom-built affairs.

That log cabin camp is what I call being up in the clouds. Oh, boy! How that cool mountain air makes you sleep.

I'm not up on the technique of road building any more than you are, Louise, but I do want to feel safe when I'm traveling. On the Montana highways all the curves are widened and on hill sides they are protected by substantial looking guard-rails that give you a feeling of assurance if you aren't used to driving mountain roads. They use a white center line out there to divide the traffic lanes. On long straight-aways the line is broken, while on most curves it is solid. Some people are puzzled by that and think the broken line represents an effort to skimp on paint. Where the line is solid it is not permissible to pass another car going in your direction, but you **can** pass where the line is broken. It is just another of their safety measures meant to help drivers.



Jean had the time of her life after we reached Montana. Her eagerness and enthusiasm were contagious. She talked to anyone and everyone until the vernacular and store of varied information which she collected were amazing. She was a westerner in spirit in no time.

One morning we were blithely sailing along miles from any town. It was early and there were very few people on the road. George was driving, with Jean in the front seat, too. All of a sudden the engine sighed, we coasted to a standstill and there we were, without power. The car had never done **that** before. George won't admit it, but he is no mechanical genius. He got out, lifted the hood and glared balefully in at all that complicated mess of wires and gadgets. He poked and probed around without getting anywhere. I was dying to offer a few suggestions, but you know how unreasonable men act at times like that, so with considerable effort I kept still.

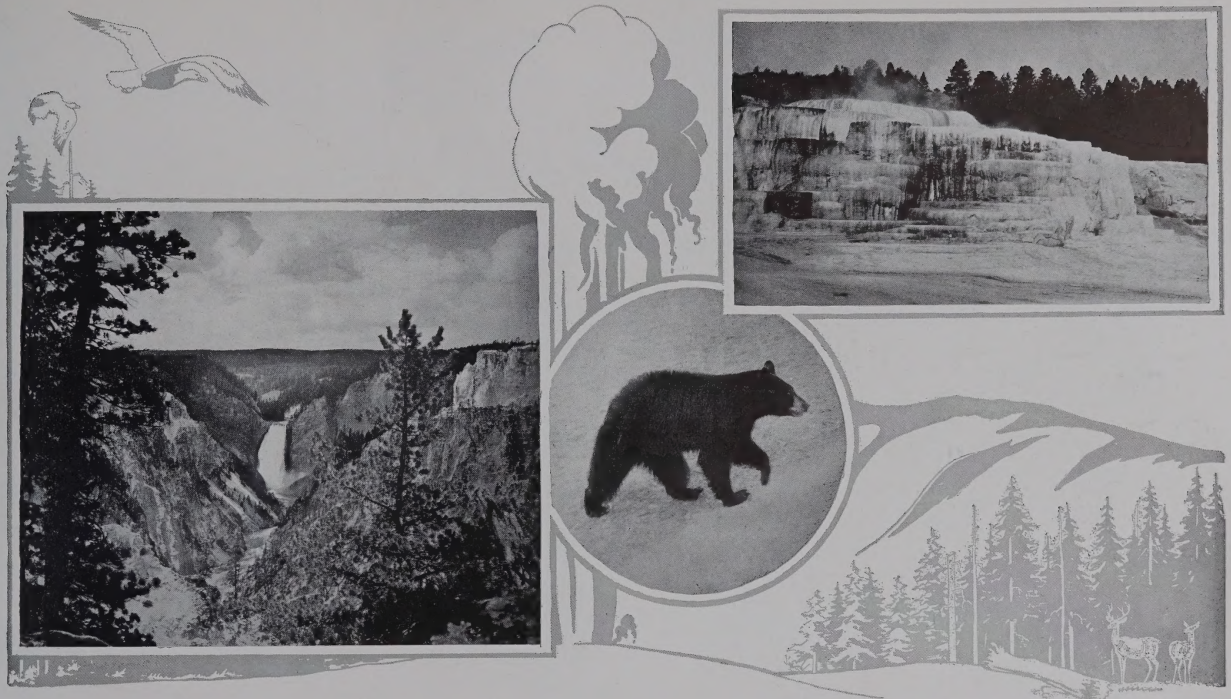
Just when George was gloomily prophesying that we were stuck for the day, a little old car came chugging down the road with a good-looking young chap driving it. He stopped and asked if we were in trouble. George explained none too graciously and this boy said perhaps he could help. In a few minutes he had done something mysterious to our engine because when he stepped on the starter the motor purred like a kitten. My, what a relief that was! He was so courteous about it that George and I fell in love with him, but for some reason the usually cordial Jean simply ignored him. I couldn't understand it and when I spoke about it after he had left, she said "I can't see anything to rave about. Just another drug store buckaroo from the settlements aimin' to impress us old time waddies," from which I gathered that she considered him an eastern show-off. Well, George and I didn't get that impression. We thanked him profusely and hoped that we might be able to repay his kindness some day in some way, but we didn't know the chance was coming so soon.

Some day I am going to start a Tour Leisurely movement with a hookworm couchant on a tendril of creeping ivy as its insignia. I may have "Look Before You Leave" for the motto. But, honestly, people miss so much because they keep one eye glued on a road map and the other on the speedometer that there ought to be a law against taking a time-piece or a calendar on a vacation.

Oh, I know that many of them have limited vacations and have set their sights to cover a certain territory in that time, but it means just touching the high and usual spots. I am all for taking in easy and seeing more things in fewer miles.

For example, there are lots of secondary roads or by-ways in Montana, that are not particularly well-improved nor publicized, which lead to no end of interesting spots. Ranching country, mining camps, forest areas, places like that. Some of these roads are dusty and some are rough, so if you are not willing to sacrifice a little comfort for the thrill of exploration, stay on the main highways. But if you whizz through a country sticking to main traveled routes you get the same detached impression that you do looking at scenery in a movie. Me for the out-of-the-way corners, where you find unspoiled creeks and lakes, secluded valleys or where you follow shaded aisles through the timber.

These three pictures are glimpses of some of the by-ways we explored in Montana.



We went into Yellowstone Park over the new Red Lodge-Cooke City road. Why Americans leave home to see the Alps is beyond me, unless that Swiss cheese is the bait that lures them. The Cooke City highway is as thrilling and spectacular a mountain drive as you will find anywhere. The Park is marvelous, of course, but I won't go into detail. It would be like telling you the ending of a thrilling mystery story you were reading. I want you and Tom to enjoy all of the wonderful surprises when you get there. Those pictures are the Grand Canyon, one of the hot springs formations, and of course, the ubiquitous bear. Those darn bears hold forth along the roads and wait for tourists to give them handouts. Before long I suppose they'll be thumbing rides.

You can't begin to do the Park justice with kodak pictures because you lose all of the magnificent coloring. You wouldn't believe it anyhow, unless you saw it. Three of the five entrances to Yellowstone are in Montana and they have by far the best highways leading to them—dustless, direct and as scenic as the Park itself. It is an excellent idea to go in by one Montana entrance and out by another.

The second night in the Park we stayed at a cabin camp. Whom should we run across but the boy who helped us with the car. George and I pounced on him. This time we introduced ourselves. He turned out to be a student at an eastern college. He said that he had been studying pretty hard and his parents had suggested a western trip, so out he came to Montana. He didn't have any particular objective and was free as the birds to come and go where he pleased. Well, I dragged Miss Jean out of her cabin and presented Bill. This time she was more polite but she was still far from cordial.

You see the quaintest old log cabins in Montana. Some of them are deserted and forlorn. They make you feel a little sad. Others are snug, cheery little places where prospectors and other old-timers live. I guess all of them could tell some fascinating stories. By way of contrast you see modern cabins and are they attractive! Some are private summer homes. The dude ranches usually have a main lodge besides the smaller guest cabins.

George, I think there is some ginger ale and white rock in the refrigerator. How about it?

You go and help him, Tom, and empty the ash trays on your way out. When you get back, George can go on with the story, but I intend to get in the last word. . . . . .

Now with those men out of the way, I can tell you about clothes, Louise. Take sport togs. Most every place you go in Montana is very informal. People are having a good time and don't bother to dress as they do at swanky summer resorts. Most of the young people wear slacks and so do some of the matrons who shouldn't. A rear view of several convinced me more than ever that travel is broadening.

You don't need fancy riding togs. In fact, most of the young people, both boys and girls, wear "Levis," which are plain old waist overalls. If you want to go in for chaps, high-heeled boots and ten-gallon hats, wait and get them out there.

Eastern Montana gets pretty hot in midsummer, but don't let that fool you. Nights are cool and sometimes downright chilly in the mountains, so be prepared. . . . . .

What! Back already? All right, you be the guide for awhile, George.

The way to get the local history is to dig up some of the old-timers. You find them in out-of-the-way places, up gulches, on ranches, in those little old log cabins. They are getting scarce and they aren't talkative as a rule. If you can get acquainted and they like you, oh boy, the stories they can tell! They mix humor and pathos and occasionally they delight in stringing a pilgrim. It isn't easy to get them started, but it is worth trying.

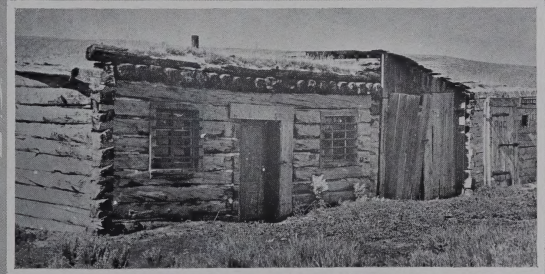
The Indian is a Blackfoot, named Lazy Boy. The picture writing on his tepee records battles and brave deeds in which he took part. Lazy Boy doesn't speak English, but like most old time Indians, he can make a deaf mute look like a man in a straitjacket when it comes to sign language. Of course, as far as we were concerned the Blackfeet language and sign talk were equally mysterious. An interpreter helped us out and we had a long and very interesting conversation with Lazy Boy.

That other old-timer lives in Magpie Gulch, where he has mined and prospected for years. Chances are that if he ever did strike it rich he would cut a wide swath in town for a short time and then head back to his cabin where things were more comfortable and familiar. You just can't pry those old mountain rats loose from the hills for any length of time, they say. The window ledges of their cabins are full of ore samples, and they always have a few choice specimens to show you. They try to appear indifferent as your eyes begin to pop, but it really is nothing but restrained gloating on their part.

You know, Tom, this Bill young one we met was quite a kid. I got a big kick out of him. A couple of days after we saw him in Yellowstone he turned up again one evening where we were stopping. That time and the next I thought were coincidences, but the fourth time I figured it had become a habit. He always put on a good act of registering surprise too. Mary and I got to liking him more and more, but not so with Jean. She knew well enough that Bill wouldn't have been camping on our trail if she hadn't been with us. She claimed that she thought it was disgusting for him to tag us around and then she would write long letters to the wild west bimbo from whom we were supposed to be weaning her. That girl is loveable, but she can be very exasperating at times.

There we are reading one of the Montana State Highway Department historical markers, and, as you will notice, Bill is right on the job. Those markers, by the way, are the best idea I've seen in any state. Each one is placed on a turnout so that you can park and read it without being mortally afraid someone will sneak up behind and telescope you into eternity. The story they tell is pepped up a little for people who are human and don't take themselves and life too seriously. We were told that there are about a hundred markers scattered around the state.

If you take pictures of any of them, be sure to use a yellow filter over your lens or they won't turn out well.

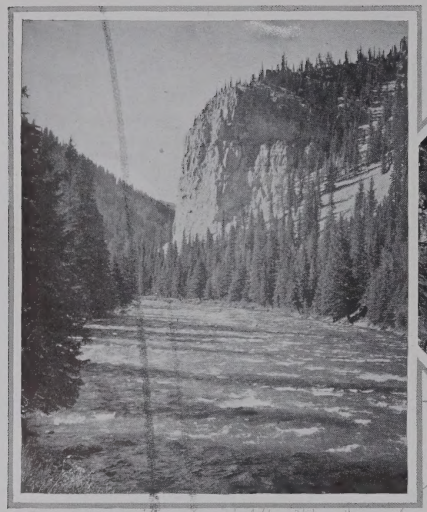


If you read up on the history of Montana, as we did, before you go out there, you find a great background of romance and adventure as fascinating as any fiction you ever read. Boy, they had some exciting times in the early days. We were not out to break any speed records so we scouted out some of the historical places off of the beaten track.

That top picture is Robber's Roost, an old stage station on the road between Sheridan and Virginia City. There isn't a great deal of travel by there now, but when Alder Gulch placer mines were booming there were stirring times along that trail and road agents used to make the place headquarters to plan some of their stagecoach holdups. Virginia City was Montana's second capital and as colorful a mining camp as ever existed. Jim Bridger guided covered wagon trains into those diggings; Calamity Jane grew up there; the notorious Slade was swung into oblivion by the Vigilantes who taught a lot of other desperadoes rope spinning tricks on the noose end of a lariat. It is a peaceful little settlement now, but Virginia City certainly had her moments in the roaring Sixties.

That one-story log affair is the first jail in Montana and in its time detained some of the West's toughest, fastest-shooting bad-men. It is in Bannack, Montana's first placer mining camp and capital. Bannack is a ghost town now, full of pioneer spooks and atmosphere.

That adobe corner is about all that is left of old Fort C. F. Smith on the Crow Indian Reservation. It overlooks the Big Horn River and was a military post built in the '60s to protect emigrant wagon trains from Indian attacks on the Bozeman or Bonanza Trail. The story of that fort and trail is typical of wild west history.

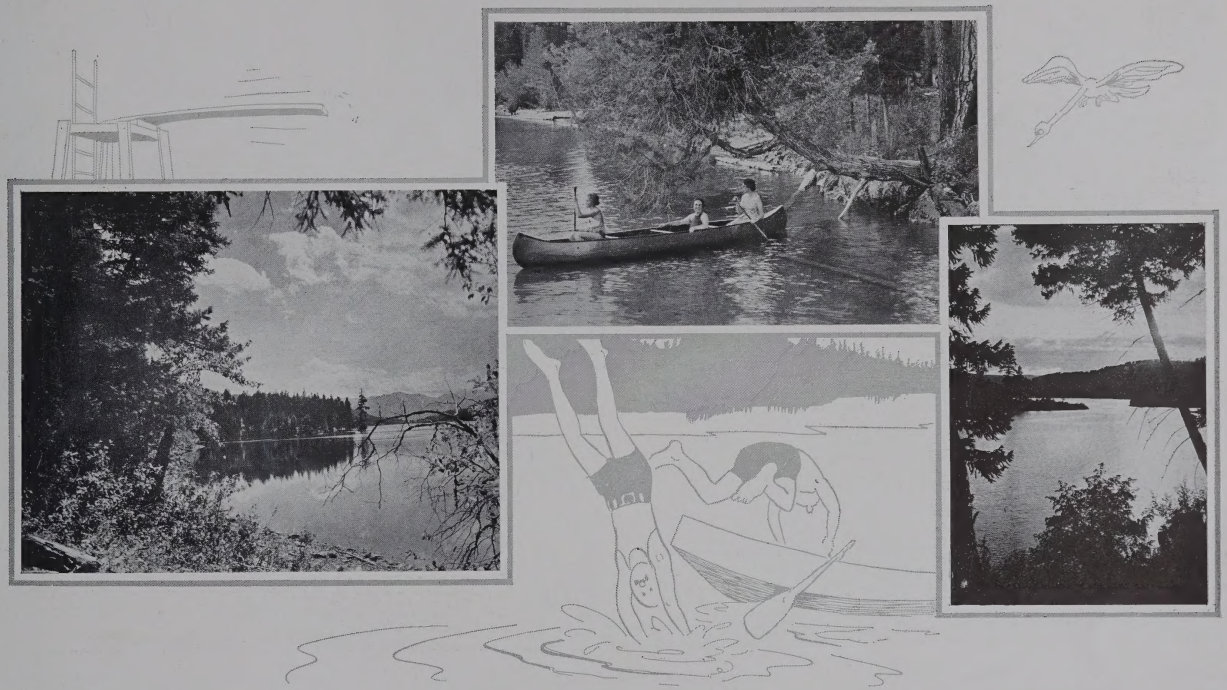


Be sure to take your fishing tackle, Tom. If you haven't a fly fishing outfit you can pick up what you need after you get there. They sell a visitor's license in Montana for $1.50 good for fifteen days or you can get a season's license for $3.50. They are on sale at the Port of Entry Stations. Moreover, the Fish and Game Department furnishes the Ports of Entry with bulletins from time to time, reporting latest stream and fishing conditions. You can have your choice of lake, river or creek fishing. These pictures show you typical water.

You can't fill a creel at every stream you come to along the highways, of course, but you know as well as I do, that a dyed-in-the-wool Ike Walton is willing to spend some time and effort to reach an honest-to-goodness fishing spot and they have them. It's a great thrill to hook a big one in swift water. Those four natives, or cut-throat, as they call 'em, were caught at the outlet of Hidden Lake near the top of Logan Pass in Glacier Park. Aren't they beauties?

I'll bet that you folks didn't know that Montana rivers drain to three different oceans. The Missouri River heads there and winds up in the Gulf of Mexico. Branches of the Columbia flow to the Pacific and the St. Mary's and the Belly Rivers reach the Arctic by way of Hudson Bay.

Big game hunting is good out there in the fall. It isn't unusual to see deer along the roads in the evening, especially in the forest areas. Camera hunters for animal pictures have plenty to work on.



Now here are some Montana lakes. We had never given lakes much thought in connection with that country. Of course, the customary thing is to refer to a good-looking lake as a gem. Well, I'm telling you, that when you add primitive forests and a background of mountain peaks outlined against the blue sky, you have something that will make the most blase' lapidary sit up and take notice.

The mountains out there are full of just such lakes. They go in for rugged individualism, no two alike, and each one seems more beautiful than the last one. The highways follow the shores of a few and the byways take you to many more. If you are really ambitious, there are plenty that can be reached by saddle horse or hiking only. Those give you a thrill because you know darn well that not many other people have seen them.

Flathead Lake is one of the largest in the United States. The east shore is right up against the toe of the Mission Mountain range and is lined with cherry orchards. By the way, the Flathead, Mission and Bitter Root valleys are famous for their fruit and berries. Their apples, cherries and strawberries have a firmness and flavor that puts them in a class by themselves. Montana grains and vegetables are National blue ribbon winners, too. You never saw such a state! It has everything! !

Here is a glimpse or so of Glacier Park. I hate to attempt a description because words are so inadequate. There is nothing in America to compare with it for color, beauty, grandeur and variety. The Continental Divide has been carved into a series of unbelievable mountain peaks. Prehistoric glaciers have cut deep cirques and valleys in their flanks. Glacier-fed cascades pour down the mountain sides to ice cold lakes that spill white water streams down the canyons and gulches. Wild flowers, moss, forests and rock strata furnish gorgeous coloring. It is the roof garden of the world.

Much of the park has been seen by very few people because it is primitive country that can be reached only by pack outfit. But there is a network of hiking and saddle trails covering the spectacular area between McDonald Lake on the west, to Many Glacier on the east, with convenient camp grounds, hotel, chalet or cabin accommodations and there is a trans-mountain road through the Park which crosses the Divide by way of Logan Pass. This highway is a boon to those who have only time enough to see a fairly typical cross section of the country or for people who can't ride or hike.

The thing we particularly liked about Glacier Park is its freedom from the artificial. There aren't many places like that left, Tom. Naturally the National Park Service has to see that accommodations are provided for the public, but they have done a wonderful job of keeping the building in harmony with the surroundings. You could spend an entire summer right there and see something new and interesting every day. Any human would have to be pretty much of a clod not to be inspired by that country.

Remember when you were a kid, Tom, and used to read about the wild west Indians? On this trip you will have a chance to see them. There are seven reservations in Montana where famous plains and mountain tribes live. If you hit it just right, you will probably have a chance to see one or more of their annual celebrations. Their dances and ceremonials have been handed down for generations. You never saw such beautiful costumes. Buckskin, eagle feathers, ermine and bead work that will knock your eye out.

Indians have a world of dignity and reserve with strangers. They have had a pretty raw deal from the white man in the past and so are naturally suspicious until you are well-known to them or have been vouched for by a mutual friend. Once you get well acquainted they are very friendly and eager to make things pleasant for you.

Jean and a western girl are talking to Cecille Crow Feathers in that first picture. Cecille is a favorite model for artists on the Blackfeet Reservation. Her husband is a former Carlisle football player.

The Indian on the saddle horse is a Blackfoot too. He and some friends were visiting on the Crow Reservation during an Indian fair and celebration. He is all set to take part in the daily parade around the camp grounds.

The five girls are Crows, or Absarokas, as they call themselves. The Battle of the Little Big Horn where Custer was defeated was fought on their reservation. U. S. 87 runs close to the battlefield. U. S. 2 takes you through the Fort Peck, Fort Belknap and Blackfeet Reservations and U. S. 93 runs through the heart of the Flathead country. The Northern Cheyenne and Rocky Boy Reservations are not on main highways.

I'll now let the lady announcer broadcast for awhile.

All right, George, get away from the mike and let me talk to my public. We don't want to wear them out with our enthusiasm, but Louise, you and Tom will be Montana fans too, once you have seen that state as we did. You will be simply crazy about the wild flowers out there. Acres and acres of them and so many varieties that were new to us. Even their cactus or prickly pear has the most delicate blossoms. But beware of the spines. They are sharp as needles. Lewis and Clark's men had a terrible time walking across some of the country with nothing but moccasins to protect their feet. By the way, you cross or follow the Lewis and Clark trail many times and get a much better idea of that magnificent adventure, than by merely reading about it. Many of the names that they gave to rivers and creeks are in use today.

Those are bear grass plumes that Jean is holding in her arms. They grow in the mountains and are very fragrant.

One morning after Bill had started trailing us around so persistently, we were breezing down the highway and saw a thumber ahead. We never pick up hitch-hikers, but this one looked familiar. It turned out to be Bill, the nomad. We stopped of course, and with that cheerful grin of his turned on full blast, he said that his faithful flivver had finally wheezed and expired. He had junked it and decided to finish his gypsying a la hitch-hiking, providing his thumb held out. George and I naturally insisted that he get in and then inasmuch as he was footloose said we would be tickled to death to have him continue on around the state with us. He protested —weakly—until Jean surprised us all by adding a fairly cordial invitation to ours. In he got and away we went, and there is his picture, especially posed. That evening I wrote sister Elizabeth telling her to stop worrying about Jean's infatuation, as we had found a powerful

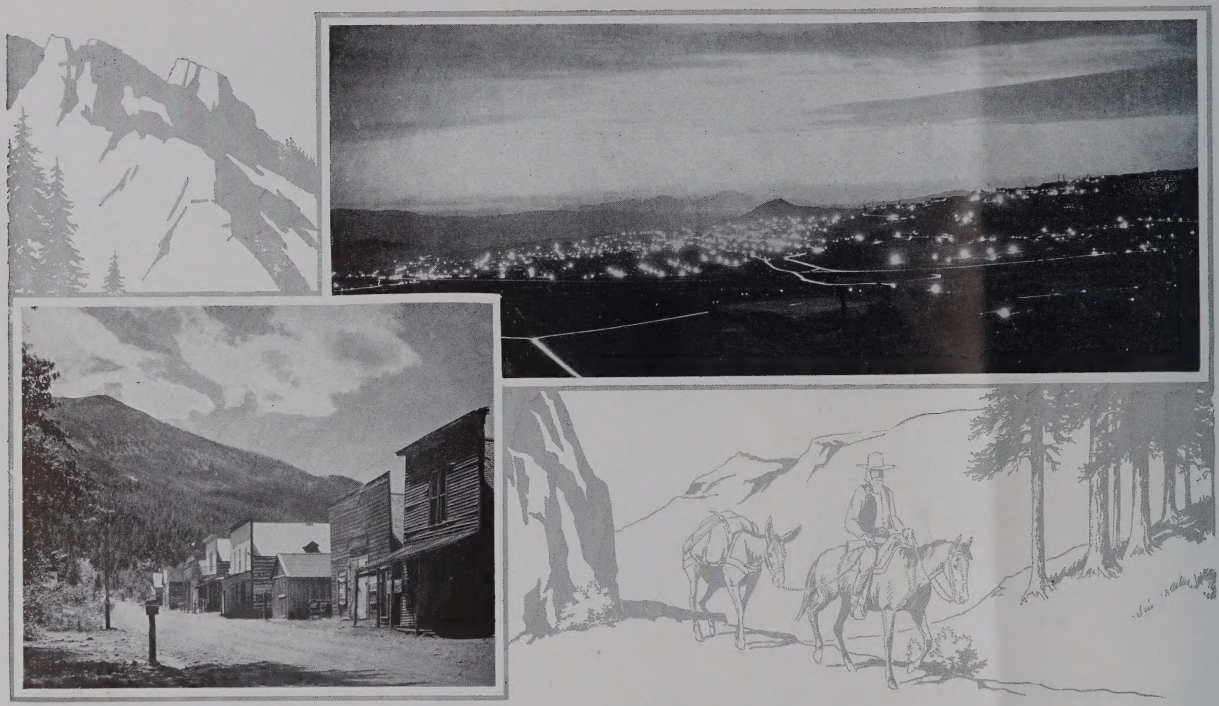
antidote that was beginning to take hold. We were pretty proud of ourselves as molders of destiny.

You will probably come in contact with wranglers, rangers and patrolmen. You will notice that Jean made her usual hit with them. The thing that impressed us all was their unfailing courtesy and eagerness to make strangers welcome. That goes for Montanans as a whole, too.

That is a highway patrolman shaking hands with George. We had stopped to take a picture when he drove up, introduced himself and said he had noticed by our license plates that we were visitors. He wanted to know whether he could give us any information or be of service in any way. We chatted for quite a while and we asked our customary quota of questions. He explained that they patrol the highways to protect and help travelers. They aren't hard-boiled about minor violation of regulations by strangers, but they do make it tough on reckless or drunken drivers when they catch them.

The wranglers in the parks and on the dude ranches handle the saddle horses. They develop quite a line. Old-time sour-doughs refer to the gaudy younger ones more or less scornfully as atmosphere buckaroos or fashion riders, but they go over big with the female of the species.

During the tourist season in the parks they put on extra rangers and the old-timers call them ninety-day wonders. The regular park rangers are mighty efficient gentlemen. They have a keen eye out for fools and vandals, but otherwise they are very unobtrusive and you never get the impression that you are about to be pounced upon by some officious soul with a keep-off-the-grass glint in his fishy eye.

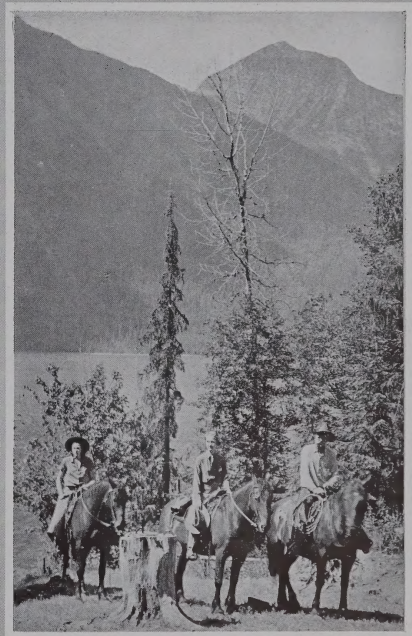


They mine most everything in Montana from A for asbestos, to Z for zonolite. No wonder it was nicknamed the Treasure State. If you like unusual jewelry, Louise, you should see what they can do combining Montana nuggets and their Yogo Gulch sapphires. Rings, bracelets, and lavaliers that are beautiful, even though some of them look a trifle barbaric.

Butte is one of the largest mining camps in the world. Copper and zinc are its specialties. That night picture shows the richest hill on earth silhouetted against the sky on the right. I guess Butte was a pretty turbulent camp in its youth, and if all the stories are to be believed, it hasn't grown up yet. Helena, the capital, is built right in Last Chance Gulch where the early day miners took out millions in gold dust. It has a mighty romantic background, too.

Then there are little old-time camps tucked away in the hills, lots of them active right now while others are dreaming away, waiting for another boom to wake them up. They remind you of ghost towns out of a Bret Harte story. With the present high price of gold as an incentive, prospectors are combing the mountains they say, burrowing for pay dirt more frantically than ever, while huge modern dredges are tearing up gravel bars to wash out the colors that the old-timers couldn't get.

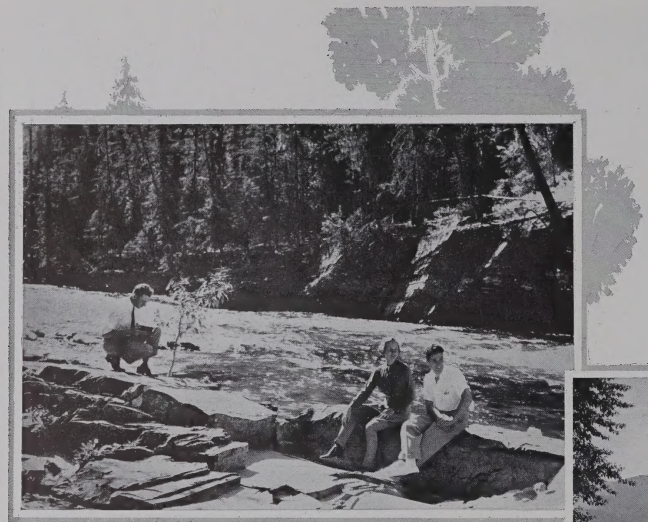
I don't suppose that the West would be the west without saddle horses. The Indians had them before the white men came to Montana and cowboys and horses are inseparable of

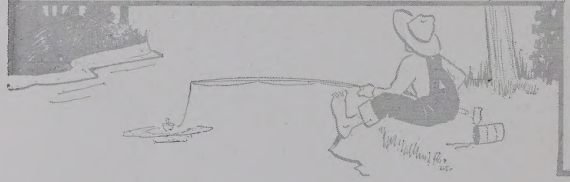


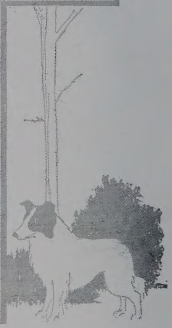
course. I had never so much as ridden a very gentyl palfrey, whatever that is, to say nothing of a western cow pony, and you know how much George has followed the hounds. Our equestrian experience had been strictly confined to merry-go-rounds. But I wasn't coming home without having a try at it.

Saddle horses are very essential furnishings around dude ranches and they have them in both national parks, so we had plenty of opportunity. Well, it was great, Louise. None of us did so badly and Bill took to a saddle like a Swede to lutefisk. That boy had the fortunate faculty of adapting himself to any conditions. Why, he could talk to those westerners in their own language, which was a great help because every now and then he would tell us that he had picked up a tip on an extra good fishing stream or some interesting side trip. Jean apparently got to liking him much better.

But to get back to the horses. We not only enjoyed riding them, but we had a big thrill watching them at a rodeo or two. There is where you see action on its native heath! How those Montana boys can ride bronchos! First thing I knew, I was jumping up and down in the grandstand shrieking, "Ride him, cowboy!" at the top of my voice. I wasn't as conspicuous as you might think, either. Everyone else was doing the same thing. Now when you get to Montana, be sure to try a saddle horse and go to a rodeo. Don't be like that old cow hand from the Rio Grande who did all of his riding in a car.







Naturally you will take your kodak and movie camera. Be sure to have a couple of filters so that you can get the cloud effects. It's just too bad that prints have to be in monochrome because in so many places out there the coloring is gorgeous.

We never tire of going over the pictures we took. They recall interesting incidents so vividly. For instance, George taking that snapshot of Jean and Bill. And that ancient snag like an old witch defying the elements at timber line. Then there is the Forest Service roadside camp where we stopped one day for a picnic lunch. Stoves, fuel, tables and spring water all ready for us.

The Forest Service does everything to encourage people to use the forests for recreational purposes. They simply ask everyone to be careful with fire. We saw a couple of burned-over areas that made us heartsick. The pity of it is that devastation like that is so needless in most cases. Someone carelessly drops a lighted cigarette or fails to drown a camp fire when they leave and thousands of those majestic trees go up in smoke. It will take generations to cover some of those scars.

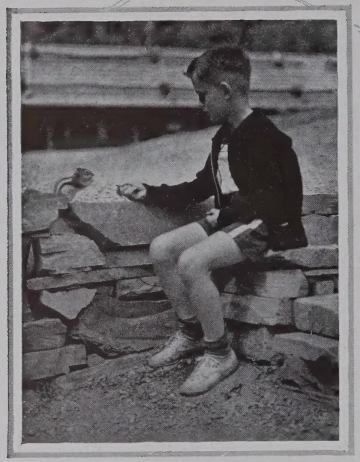
You know, there isn't a great deal of really primitive country left in the United States. I mean country that isn't desert and that would look familiar to someone like old Jim Bridger if he could come back from the Happy Hunting Grounds. Civilization has plowed, fenced, dug and slashed up most of it. Well, one of the smart things that has been done in Montana is the establishing of primitive areas that can only be explored on foot or saddle horse. You have

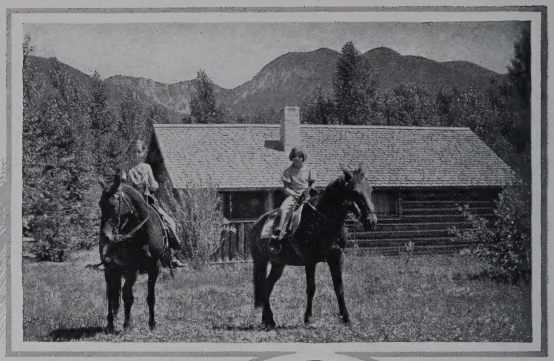
to pack back into that sort of country and only people who love it will make the effort and thank goodness they won't be folks with a mania for leaving their banana peels and initials all over the scenery. Vandalism does burn me up.

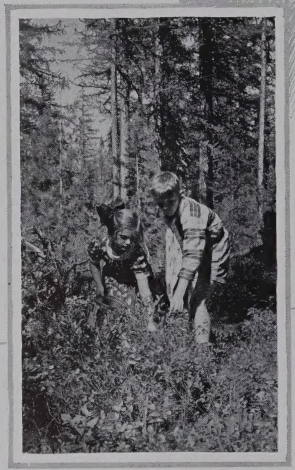
If you two can't forego your golf take your clubs with you. Jean and George are fighting it out on the course at Glacier Park Station. You will find plenty of other courses, too—some of them where you would least expect them.

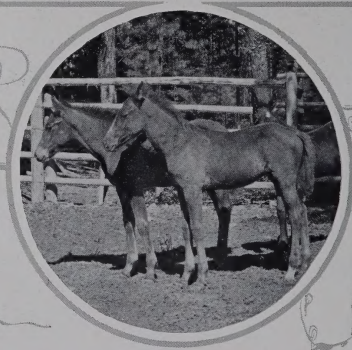
Another thing that we all enjoyed was drinking from the mountain springs and creeks. They aren't the murky, contaminated sort we have at home. You don't have to run the water through a meat grinder before drinking it. It comes direct from old Mother Nature's refrigerating plant. Those are certainly stream-lined mountains out there to go with the air-conditioned climate.

Tom really ought to take a real vacation and forget all business cares, but I know how men are and it may reassure him to know that he can keep in touch with the home office by air-mail, and should emergency arise, he can get transportation on the Northwest Air Lines, or the Western Air Express. Moreover, the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railways run crack, air-conditioned trains across Montana from east to west, to say nothing of the Burlington and Union Pacific that come in from the south.









Montana is without doubt a great place for kids. The clean air and wide open spaces do things to them. It gives them a better outlook on life and certainly they are safer and healthier in uncrowded western country than on our pavements and vacant lots. They can play Indian and cowboy to their heart's content in a realistic setting. What child doesn't want to ride horseback or have a chance to pick huckleberries? Kids, colts and pups! Aren't they a great combination? Every child we saw amongst the tourists was interested in animals, both wild and domestic, and they want to see them in their native surroundings.

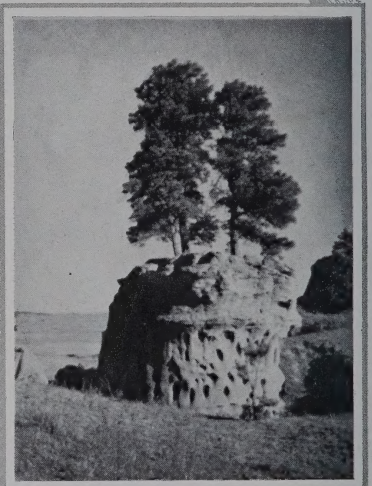
Well, naturally buffalo aren't stampeding over the prairies promiscuously, but there is a large Government bison reserve on the Flathead Reservation where they roam around pretty much au naturel. You can often see them right from the highways. That same reserve is well stocked with elk, too. The children all like the bears in the Parks. A lot of tourists think those bears are tame just because they beg for food along the highways. They are regular clowns and it is fun to watch them. However, we were emphatically warned that to let them get too close or to feed them out of your hand is a dangerous mistake. They will eat out of your hand all right, and out of your leg, too, if they get peeved.

Of course, the little animals aren't quite as exciting for the kids as bears, but they enjoy them almost as much. There are plenty of groundhogs, chipmunks, squirrels, porcupines and long-legged jackrabbits along the highways to keep them amused. If they are lucky they may even get a glimpse of a coyote.

We stayed for a while at a dude ranch and it was a most enjoyable experience. You know a dude, in western parlance, is a paying guest. The term so applied originated amongst the stagecoach drivers in Yellowstone Park before the Park was motorized. Any tourist was a dude to them and they were known as savages. On a cattle roundup the fellows who take care of the horses or "cavvy" are known as wranglers, so anyone who rides herd on dudes is called a dude wrangler.

No two dude ranches are exactly alike. Each spread differs in locale, management and rates. Some are in the plains country, some are in the mountains and some combine both. All of them have good food, horses and western atmosphere. There is little or no formality and you meet delightful people, both guests and natives. We had a great time at the place we stayed. We never ate nor slept better in our lives. Hiking, riding, fishing and swimming took a lot of kinks out of us and there is something inspiring about that big country that freshens you up both mentally and physically.

Most dude ranches arrange pack trips for their guests. That is the way to get back into the primitive areas. A wrangler takes you over mountain trails into the unspoiled wilderness. You camp out and the cook does his stuff on a little sheet iron stove or over an open fire. When that smell of coffee and bacon wafts into your tent in the morning you realize what that nectar and ambrosia menu of the gods must have been like at the Mount Olympus Cafe.

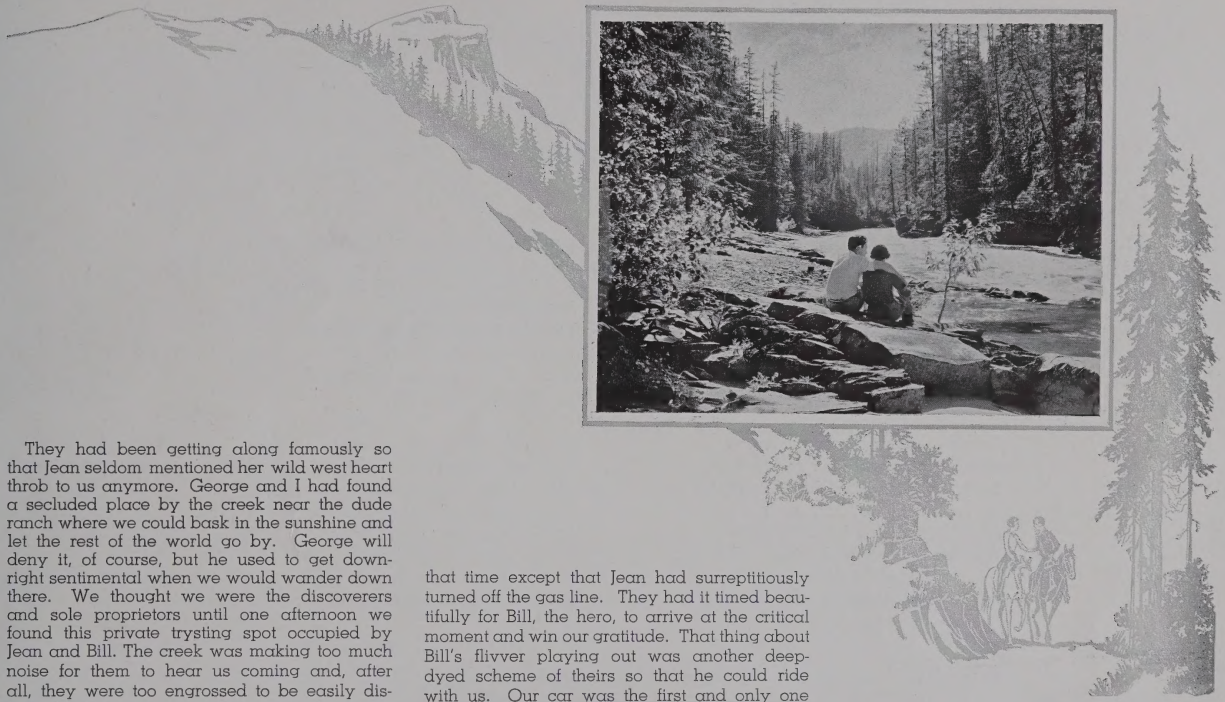


The badlands in eastern Montana are weird districts. You can almost imagine yourself on some deserted planet where all kinds of fantastic formations appear. You know how recklessly scientists toss years around? Well, if the authorities know their calendars, that part of the country was semi-tropical some millions of years ago. At various periods there were dinosaurs, monkeys, sabre-toothed tigers and what not prowling around all over the place. Those different kinds of ologists who dote on old bones consider it a fossil hunter's paradise. You will see all sorts of strange geological formations, each with a story behind it.

The Medicine Rocks are dotted along a ridge a mile or so off the main road between Baker and Ekalaka. Look at those big trees growing right out of one of them. There are dozens of these rocks shaped like castles, temples, and ships. They were held sacred by the Indians and beads and arrow heads which were sacrificed are still found there. In fact, relics and artifacts of ancient tribes are found all over Montana.

Eastern Montana was a famous cattle range in the hard riding days of the beef bonanza. Bovines and buckaroos are still plentiful, but thundering herds won't run you down and no untamed ranch hand will shoot at your feet.

It makes me homesick for Montana just to look at these pictures, and they are the merest suggestion of all the things we saw and did. George, let's arrange to go again this summer. Perhaps we could give Louise and Tom a personally conducted tour. Wouldn't that be fun? That state is so darn big and varied that we could go every summer for the next ten years and see something different every time. But, good heavens—I almost forgot to tell you about Jean and Bill!



They had been getting along famously so that Jean seldom mentioned her wild west heart throb to us anymore. George and I had found a secluded place by the creek near the dude ranch where we could bask in the sunshine and let the rest of the world go by. George will deny it, of course, but he used to get downright sentimental when we would wander down there. We thought we were the discoverers and sole proprietors until one afternoon we found this private trysting spot occupied by Jean and Bill. The creek was making too much noise for them to hear us coming and, after all, they were too engrossed to be easily disturbed. George snapped this picture and we sneaked away, quite pleased with ourselves.

Just before we left the ranch to head for home they came to us rather sheepishly with a story that knocked the props out from under our smugness. Jean's indifference to Bill had been nothing but a pose all the time. They had planned the whole nefarious plot. Shortly after we met Bill, when the car was misbehaing, Jean saw Bill practically every day and kept him posted as to what our next move would be. As a matter of fact, nothing was wrong with the car that time except that Jean had surreptitiously turned off the gas line. They had it timed beautifully for Bill, the hero, to arrive at the critical moment and win our gratitude. That thing about Bill's flivver playing out was another deep-dyed scheme of theirs so that he could ride with us. Our car was the first and only one that he thumbed.

They had accomplished exactly what they had started out to do. We had fallen hard for Bill and the way Jean apparently snubbed him had just egged us on to take his part. We had played into their hands beautifully. George and I were more or less dazed by this denouement, but what in the world could we do? So we gave them our blessing. I promised to intercede with Elizabeth, which I did. I guess her opinion of our finesse and ability as chaperones dropped considerably, but I finally convinced her that Bill was a very bright and eligible young man.

Oh, for heaven's sake, didn't I tell you? Why, Bill was no one else but Jean's original wild west suitor, born and raised in Montana. No wonder he knew—oh, what's the use?

I really intended to let George tell you a lot more about our trip than he has. I seem to have monopolized most of the conversation. Well, never mind, George. Women, generally speaking . . . . . .

Yes, dear, they are.

OPEN RANGE

Western Land was made for those
Who like land wild and free,
For cattle, deer and buffalo,
For antelope and me;
For those who like a land the way
That it was made by God,
Before men thought they could improve
By plowing up the sod.

The cities seem to ear me down
And I can't stand their roar.
They make me have the itching foot
To get back West once more.
I hate the milling herds in town
With all the soot and grime,
I wouldn't trade a western trail
For Broadway any time.

I want the rivers running clean,
I want a clear, blue sky—
A place to draw a good deep breath
And live before I die.
I want the sage, I want the grass,
I want the curlew's call,
And I don't want just half a loaf,
I've got to have it all.

Just give me country big and wide
With benchland, hills and breaks,
With coulees, cactus, buttes and range,
With creeks and mountain lakes,
Until I cross the Great Divide
Where starry realms begin,
Then turn me loose on my cayuse
But please don't fence me in!

BOB FLETCHER